

Reducing Harms Associated with Vaping in a School Setting

DEFINITIONS:

- **Vaping** is inhaling and exhaling an aerosol produced by a vaping device, such as an electronic cigarette. Vaping does not require burning like cigarette smoking; however, heating the liquid can create harmful chemicals.
- **Vaping Devices** consist of a battery, mouthpiece, heating element (e.g. coil/atomizer), and a tank or reservoir to hold a liquid solution. They heat a liquid solution to create a vapour/aerosol. There are different types including e-cigarettes, box mods, all-in-ones and pod systems. Some are easy to identify while others look like USB drives, but they all work in a similar way.
- **Vaping Substances/E-juices/E-liquids** contain a mixture of chemicals including flavourings, propylene glycol and/or vegetable glycerin (glycerol), and often nicotine (low to very high concentrations). The label of ingredients and nicotine concentrations on the container or package may not be complete or accurate.

CONTEXT:

- Youth vaping is a concern in schools and communities. **Data** indicates that 1 in 5 BC youth aged 12-19 years have used e-cigarettes in the last 30 days. With over 7,000 flavours, vaping products are marketed and appeal to youth. Preventing nicotine addiction among youth requires a comprehensive approach, including the involvement of youth, parents, educators, and healthcare providers.
- In BC, the **Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Act** stipulates that vaping products cannot be sold to youth under 19 years and cannot be used on school grounds.

KEY MESSAGES:

- Vaping is not recommended for youth and non-smokers.
- Vaping exposes users to **harmful chemicals** (some of which can damage the heart and lungs, and/or lead to cancer).
- Vaping can lead to **nicotine addiction**. Nicotine is known to be harmful to the developing brain up to 25 years of age.
- Emerging evidence indicates that vaping may lead to smoking.
- Modifying vaping devices or using home-made or illicitly manufactured vaping products is not recommended.
- Non-users can be exposed to harmful chemicals found in the second-hand vapour.
- The long-term health consequences of vaping are unknown.
- Users should monitor for symptoms of lung illness such as cough, shortness of breath and chest pain and seek medical attention if they have concerns about their health.

Ideas for Vaping Prevention at School using a Comprehensive School Health Approach

School Policies

- Communicate school policy, Code of Conduct and the provincial [legislation](#) through multi-channels.
- Communicate that the policy applies to field trips and visitors to school grounds.
- Obtain [signage](#) and post at school.
- Appoint a staff leader to oversee and champion vaping prevention and cessation initiatives in the school.
- Have a plan for non-compliance including providing reduction and cessation support (e.g. resources as well as alternatives to suspension such as [restorative practices](#)/action).

Community Partnerships

- Liaise with [health authority programs](#) to provide support, education and/or training to school staff, parents and students.
- Seek support for prevention and cessation programs (e.g. DASH/Healthy Schools Grants, Health Canada micro-grants).
- Encourage youth (ages 12-19) to lead action through using grants (e.g. [McCreary Centre Society Youth Action Grants](#)).
- Encourage students to engage with community groups (e.g. school clubs, neighbourhood houses, Boys and Girls Clubs).

VCH SUPPORT

- ✓ We offer data, vaping prevention education or training as well as resources for staff and parents.



Physical & Social Environments

- Recommend parents and teachers start the [conversation about vaping](#) and continue it.
- Promote school/social connectedness (e.g. student ambassadors/peer mentors).
- Understand [why youth are vaping](#) in order to provide appropriate support (e.g. encourage open and compassionate dialogue among peers and trusted adults).
- Adapt any current 'smoking/vaping' areas for healthier activities (such as games/sports, community gardens, composting).
- Conduct surveillance and clean-up of school grounds re: vaping litter.

Teaching & Learning

- Incorporate vaping education into curriculum, especially in transition years (grades 7/8).
- Discuss vaping in a balanced/objective way and [provide the facts](#).
- Share appropriate resources through youth mediums (e.g. social media).
- Teach/assist students with [healthy coping skills and stress management](#).
- Available resources include:
 - **Elementary:** [BC Lung Vaping Prevention Toolkit](#)
 - **Secondary:** [Consider the Consequences of Vaping](#), VCH PPT also available
- Support cessation through family doctor, youth clinics and [QuitNow](#).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Healthlink BC Vaping](#), [BC Ministry of Health](#), [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), [Quash Adult Facilitator Training](#), [US FDA Real Cost Campaign](#), [David Geffen School of Medicine \(UCLA, Video\)](#)